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SUBJECT: GERMANY: EXPECTATIONS LOW FOR NOVEMBER 19 GENEVA  
TALKS; SEEKING ALTERNATIVE TO MAP

REF: STATE 119280

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Jeffrey Rathke  
for reasons: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C)SUMMARY. Contacts at the MFA and the Chancellery remain hopeful that the Geneva Talks will succeed in bringing all parties--especially Abkhazia and South Ossetia--to the table on November 19. Poloffs met with Chancellery Desk Officer for South Caucasus and Central Asia Agapi Nehring, who expected a dinner to occur on November 18 with informal expert talks following the next day. Nehring and MFA contacts indicated that Germany would view the talks as a success if all parties took part, but recognized that little progress had been made since the October Geneva Talks in determining how to seat representatives from the two breakaway provinces. Regarding NATO, Nehring indicated that Germany remains open to an alternative to MAP for the December Ministerial, but relayed that many within the policy apparatus question NATO's relation to Russia. MFA contacts expected the upcoming OSCE Ministerial in Helsinki to provide a forum for discussing the EU and OSCE observer missions in Georgia and Russian President Medvedev's proposal for a new European security architecture. Finally, Nehring related

that the visit of Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on November 14 focused on the possibility of Turkmenistan's natural gas serving as an alternative to that of Russia. END SUMMARY

GENEVA TALKS

12. (C) Germany remains supportive of the efforts of EU Special Representative for the Georgia Crisis Pierre Morel to advance the Geneva Talks, but doubts that the breakaway provinces, especially Abkhazia, are interested in seeing progress made. When asked about the progress that could be expected from this meeting, Nehring responded that merely getting all parties to sit at the same table and talk is a measure of success. While no groundbreaking movement is expected at the November 19th meeting, Nehring hoped that Morel's plans for additional meetings in early and mid-December would yield more results.

13. (C) Nehring emphasized Germany's concern about the recent shooting near the border of Abkhazia on November 15, when observers from the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) came under fire, and about the recent Russian and South Ossetian troop movements in Perevi. Although Nehring did not express a clear view on whether Russian troops in Perevi represented a violation of the cease-fire agreements, she was concerned by the South Ossetian control of the town. Both incidents are high priority topics for the Geneva Talks, according to Nehring.

#### NATO: SEEKING AN ALTERNATIVE TO MAP

14. (C) Nehring does not have direct responsibility for NATO issues, but shared observation that reflect internal discussion of NATO MAP for Georgia and Ukraine. Nehring noted that Germany is cautious about extending membership too quickly for fear that it may result in a situation similar to that in Bulgaria or Romania. Specifically, now that Bulgaria and Romania have been granted EU and NATO membership prematurely, the two have no incentives for continuing reform and battling corruption. Nehring stressed the German interest in seeking a common approach for the NATO Foreign Ministerial in December, perhaps involving assistance for military development in Georgia and Ukraine. Nehring also shared that some in the German policy apparatus who suggest that U.S. advocacy of MAP for Georgia and Ukraine provoked Russia in August are "getting a lot of play right now."

#### OSCE DECEMBER MINISTERIAL: A FORUM FOR THE RUSSIAN PROPOSAL

15. (C) Poloff met with Deputy Head of OSCE Division Karin Goebel and OSCE Desk Officer Marko Lins on November 14 to discuss the upcoming OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki. Although Goebel and Lins agreed that Russian President Medvedev's proposal for a new European security architecture seeks to divide the transatlantic alliance and is contradicted by many Russian actions in Georgia (see reftel), they supported a discussion of the proposal at the OSCE Ministerial. Specifically, Goebel expected it to be part of a lunch discussion. Nehring confirmed that Germany expects the OSCE to provide a forum for discussing the proposal. Goebel stressed that the OSCE must show unity in Helsinki in the face of continued Russian resistance to new OSCE observers entering South Ossetia.

#### CENTRAL ASIA

16. (C) Nehring also discussed briefly the visit of Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to Berlin on November 14, during which he met separately with Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Steinmeier. The focus of the visit was the possible role of Turkmenistan as a natural gas supplier and the Nabucco pipeline project. Turkmenistan has enormous natural gas reserves that could be used as an alternative to those of Russia, and Nehring said the meetings advanced those interests although she was unable to provide any details.

TIMKEN JR